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Summary record of the 3rd meeting
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Chairman : Mr. Kuchinsky ..... (Ukraine)
later : Ms. Abdul Aziz (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 93: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly *(continued)* (A/59/120 and A/59/115)

Agenda item 94: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family *(continued)* (A/59/73)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (A/59/176)

(b) United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all (A/59/267)

Agenda item 95: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing *(continued)* (A/59/164)

1. **Mr. Moeini** (Islamic Republic of Iran), having endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that at the next session of the Commission for Social Development the international community should renew its commitment to the outcomes of the World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen and support the Commission in enforcing their implementation. Recognizing the valuable work of the Commission, the Islamic Republic of Iran encouraged the Commission to focus more on practical measures that could facilitate application at all levels by addressing the constraints that countries faced when it came to implementation rather than engaging in abstract and purely theoretical debates on social development issues. In that context, it was necessary to review the Commission's method of work with a view to strengthening the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit.

2. The Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family offered the international community an opportunity to recall that the family, resulting from the union between man and woman, was the basic unit of the society. Family policies should enhance the stability of the family. The Islamic Republic of Iran concurred with many proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report and considered them conducive to strengthening that institution in all countries. One particular concern that could arise from the report related to the definition of the family. There was certainly no consensus among Member States on a single definition, but the Islamic Republic of Iran did not consider that to be a global problem requiring a departure from traditional United Nations practice. Moreover, the study referred to in the Secretary-General's report contained terms and statements that were historically and factually incorrect and, therefore, it could not be regarded as a reliable source.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran recognized the importance of the proposed Supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. However, those proposals should not pose a further burden, over and above international agreements and norms, on countries that had been serving a huge population of refugees over a long period of time. Furthermore, the Standard Rules should highlight the situation of disabled persons in emergency situations, disability resulting from natural disasters and the role of science and technology in preventing disability. Last but not least, among the various groups of disabled persons, attention should be paid to the persons disabled as a result of contamination by chemical substances.

4. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the extensive participation of various actors in the Third and Fourth Sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, but was not entirely comfortable with the speed of the work and with some controversial proposals which could delay finalization of the text of the convention. It was crucial to avoid proposing controversial ideas that had proved unproductive in similar negotiations and to ensure that the convention led to effective international cooperation on ways to exchange information, scientific findings, technology and resources in order to take into account the development perspective of disability.

5. **Ms. Nguyen** (Australia), speaking under agenda item 94 and as the Australian youth representative, pointed out that, in areas of Australia where young

people were not taken into consideration as social and cultural contributors to their community, the rates of juvenile crime and detention were higher. Compared to earlier generations, young Australians were currently confronted with an overwhelming level of information and complexity. They were often under pressure to make immediate choices, although many had not yet developed the requisite emotional resources. The issues that they faced, however, varied among the various population sections. For many young indigenous Australians, the rates of retention at school remained very low, incarceration rates for young males were much higher than the national average and unemployment was a significant issue. Most youths in that group did not own a computer, although some organizations aimed to reduce the digital divide by creating online communities throughout Australia and educating and connecting young indigenous people. Youths that were marginalized - for whatever reason - were confronted with issues of identity and perception. Never before had the need for community engagement and development been so paramount.

6. Many organizations desired the participation and contribution of young people. However, the methods and language of engagement were often disempowering and resulted in a barrier to effective participation. Young people possessed a plethora of valuable qualities but ensuring their participation was difficult. Investment in infrastructure would make participation meaningful. One of the best ways for young people to participate was community cultural development. Australia was a leader in that practice, and mention should be made of the Foundation for Young Australians, which embraced the principle that, in the new millennium, young people had the capacity and the intelligence to determine what was best for them, provided them with study grants and involved them in decision-making.

7. Although many youth representatives had for several decades addressed the Third Committee and urged its members to include youth representatives in the delegations, the number of total youth representatives to the General Assembly was still smaller than ten. It was essential that all Member States should send a youth delegate to the General Assembly.

8. **The Chairman**, responding to the Australian representative's call, observed that the staff of the Ukrainian Mission to the United Nations comprised 16 civil servants, including two women, aged 27 on average. There were therefore delegations that specifically tried to promote the participation of young people.

9. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America), speaking under agenda item 24, drew special attention to literacy and education, ageing and the family and stated that those issues were linked. A strong family supported both its children and its ageing members to achieve and maintain their independence. Literate children grew into capable adults.

10. The United States supported the United Nations Literacy Decade, and were pleased that First Lady Laura Bush had been designated Honorary Ambassador for the Decade. The United States ensured that every child in America received a solid education. The majority of its young people continued their education after high school, and all persons had equal access to higher education, irrespective of gender, race, religion or ethnicity. Access to higher education continued to be promoted as the number and size of community colleges increased. Various education systems, with options to suit every child, provided more opportunities today for the society of tomorrow.

11. At the international level, the United States worked to create adequate opportunities for children to grow up and learn in a secure environment. A long-standing supporter of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States had, in the previous year alone, given UNICEF $270 million. The United States participated in two major initiatives that sought to eradicate polio and to promote other child-survival partnerships. Over the past 50 years, United States children had collected $123 million through their own fund-raising efforts. That money helped UNICEF to carry out important work such as HIV/AIDS prevention, immunizations and girls' education. The United States' partnership with UNDP was likewise solid and long-standing, and the United States contribution of $190 million in 2003 was a sign of firm support for the programme.

12. The United States continued its efforts to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The goal was to work at both local and federal levels to provide elderly people with tools and programmes that would enable them to lead their lives as they chose. Poverty rates among the elderly had

declined significantly in the United States, and the Federal Government had recently created a new programme to make prescription drugs more affordable.

13. The United States delegation was pleased to hear that a new focal point on the family had been appointed in the Social Policy Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), and was looking forward to the General Assembly debate and other events planned for December 6 to discuss that vital issue in greater detail.

14. **Mr. Cumberbatch Miguén** (Cuba), having endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that, almost ten years after the World Summit for Social Development, the world situation was, for most societies, more precarious and unstable than ever. For a while, it had seemed that the commitments made in Copenhagen would be implemented and that an end would be put to extreme poverty, which currently affected 1.2 billion people, but, looking at the current conditions, it was appropriate to thoroughly review the texts adopted in 1995 and five years later, at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. The next session of the Commission for Social Development was an ideal opportunity to address that issue, proceed with a serious evaluation and adopt recommendations concerning the ten commitments made in Copenhagen, taking into account the new difficulties encountered by developing countries as a result of inadequate funds and of the unfair and unsustainable conditions brought about by the new global economic order. As a result of the current distribution of wealth, 20 percent of the population of the developed countries consumed 86 percent of total production, while the remaining 80 percent of the population lived in growing poverty. About 800 million persons suffered from hunger, more than 115 million children were not enrolled in school and 876 million persons were illiterate. Although most of those problems affected mainly the Third World, such inequalities also beset the societies of the wealthiest countries, where pockets of poverty and equally outrageous situations were not infrequent.

15. Promoting social development at the international level presupposed full implementation of the commitments made in Copenhagen and at other major United Nations conferences. Developing countries should no longer be asked to spend less on health, education, culture and social protection. Cuba considered that international cooperation, essential for improving the living conditions of the population, should be based on many criteria, address directly the social groups that needed it, suit the programmes and priorities of beneficiary countries and respect local traditions and cultures, in accordance with the 1995 statements. Cooperation would remain ineffective, if the developed countries did not fulfil their commitment to devote 0.7 percent of their gross national revenue (GNP) to official development assistance (ODA) and if the developing countries' external debt were not written off. In 2003, developed countries had paid more than US$68 billion in ODA but received US$436 billion in the form of debt servicing. The figures spoke for themselves.

16. Cuba had managed to implement social development strategies based on the principles of social equality and justice. A number of initiatives had succeeded in improving progressively social development policy, whose main beneficiaries had been children, young people, the disabled and older people. Those results had been achieved despite the 40-year old embargo imposed by the United States and reinforced through new measures - announced by that country's Government on 6 May 2004 and put into effect on 30 June 2004 - against Cuba's health and education systems, the Cuban people's right to food and the promotion of cultural development in the country.

17. Moreover, during preparations to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, obscure electoral considerations had prompted a new attack on the Cuban family. President Bush's administration, obsessed with setting back the Cuban revolution, had assumed the right to revise the definition of a Cuban family, limiting it to "grandparents, grandchildren, parents, brothers and sisters, spouses and children". In other words, no uncle, aunt or other relative would any longer be part of Cuban families living in the United States. Under the new restrictions, only the family members designated by the United States Government could receive remittances, while Cubans living in the United States who sent money, medicines or any other articles to an uncle, an Aunt, a cousin, any other relative or a friend could be prosecuted.

18. The Programme for Action of the World Summit for Social development adopted in 1995 affirmed that the family was "the basic unit of society and as such

should be strengthened " and that "in different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist[ed]". In the new attack against Cuba, the representatives of the United States Government had tried to deprive Cuban families of their identity by denying that they included relatives who traditionally were part of that basic unit of the Cuban people. Despite all that aggression, the results of Cuban social protection programmes were eloquent. The Cuban population as a whole had access to the health services, the rate of infant mortality had been reduced to 6 per 1,000 live births, all children were vaccinated against a dozen of avoidable illnesses, more than 95 percent of the territory was serviced by the power network and 80 percent of the rural population had access to drinking water.

19. It was essential to reaffirm - in connection with the Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development - that the only way of achieving fair and equitable development for all consisted in changing an international order whereby a minority held the largest share of wealth, while every day the majority of the planet's population had to fight poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and social exclusion.

20. **Mr. Gzilal** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), after endorsing the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that, although the situation regarding social development was in some ways very promising, much remained to be done. Efforts at the international level should be redoubled. In fact, some of the recommendations made - particularly in the areas of poverty, disease, foreign occupation, the negative impact of globalization and technology transfer - had not been heeded. The political will and the funds necessary to improve living conditions were lacking; and it should be borne in mind that precarious economic conditions could help to destabilize some countries and marginalize entire societies.

21. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya welcomed the special attention paid by the United Nations to Africa, but the international community should help the continent by paying fair prices for the commodities and raw materials that it produced; enabling it to combat such scourges as tuberculosis and malaria, raise the population's educational standard and combat external monopolies; meeting its commitments; and ensuring that globalization became more equitable and developing countries were integrated into the world economy.

22. Dialogue was the right option, ethnic conflicts should end and full advantage should be taken of information and communication technologies (ICTs) because the dissemination of knowledge was an essential element of sustainable development.

23. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya gave high priority to human resources development and was fully attentive to the disabled, the young and the elderly in total conformity with Islamic culture.

24. **Mr. Osmane** (Algeria), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He underscored that the principles established in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development were more pertinent than ever and that it was necessary - as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly - to better understand and manage the social impact of globalization, gear national and international macroeconomic policies to achieving social goals and build the capacities of governments to enable them to implement their own social policies. In that regard, Algeria endorsed - and had already partially implemented - the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation. Algeria had set up an integrated social development system based on governance and the principles of social justice and national solidarity and geared to combating simultaneously unemployment and poverty. Two elements of that system were an inter-sector unit for studying national employment strategy options and a monitoring unit for protecting and promoting employment. The 2005 budget act provided for the establishment of a fund to support investment for employment, and for the extension of microenterprise creation incentives to unemployed persons aged 35 to 50. Moreover, 25 percent of the operational budget concerned education and training and more than 20 percent went to national solidarity, retirement and other pensions, youth and sport. Lastly, the infrastructure budget had increased by 15 percent and showed the Government's resolve to ensure that the country closed gaps in its development and to support economic growth, as a source of wealth and social well-being.

25. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was an important initiative. Developing countries often lacked the means to implement their social policies, and it was therefore essential that the international community should help them to meet their commitments. Social development implied interdependence, an aspect that deserved thorough study in the framework of the Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development and the review of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

26. **Ms. Tejima** (Japan) said that the Heads of Government who had gathered in Copenhagen in 1995 had recognized that people should be placed at the centre of public policies and development strategies, and Japan fully shared the importance of people-centred approach and believed that it contributed to international peace and security. However, the international community was still a long way from arriving at concrete and efficient means of implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, and the related ten-year review scheduled in February 2005 should be substantive and proactive.

27. Regarding older people, Japan was taking specific measures consistent with the priorities of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The introduction of a system of continuous employment up to the age of 65 was promoted, and new grants were offered to companies that provided exercise courses to prevent a decline in physical ability with age and to enable older people to live independently as long as possible. Grants were also made available to nursing homes for appropriate staff training, and measures were taken to ensure the safety of older pedestrians. Japan's life expectancy was the highest in the world for both men and women and necessitated reforming the pension and medical care systems to meet the growing needs. In that regard, Japan looked forward to the publication, in 2005, of the study carried out by the International Longevity Centre.

28. Regarding persons with disabilities, Japan was actively participating in the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. At the national level, the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities had been recently revised to include an article on the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities and to provide for greater involvement of people with disabilities in policy-making. The Japanese Government cooperated with national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which were very active in that area.

29. Concerning literacy, the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan had initiated a unique international cooperative programme providing out-of-school children and illiterate adults in developing countries with the opportunity to study. It had served 715,000 learners at a cost of approximately US$12 million. Japan was aware of the many challenges faced by the United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all, and would continue to cooperate with the international community on that fundamental issue.

30. **Ms. Kang** (Republic of Korea) stressed that, as the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120) indicated, many challenges still remained in relation to all three core issues identified at the World Summit for Social Development, namely poverty eradication, achievement of full and productive employment, and enhancement of social integration. The Republic of Korea commended the efforts of the Commission for Social Development and had high expectations that the forty-third session of the Commission would be an occasion for governments to redouble their resolve to attain the goals that had been set. Although there was no "one size fits all" when it came to social development, no single universal path, the Republic of Korea concurred with the Secretary-General's report that the promotion of dynamic, open and free markets must be combined with public intervention to prevent or counteract market failure, while expenditures on social programmes could actually be productive for both the economy and society. In that regard, the Republic of Korea appreciated the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

31. The Republic of Korea firmly believed that literacy and education to promote literacy were among the most important tools for social development, and thus had been sponsoring the King Sejong Literacy Prize of UNESCO since 1989, commended the initiatives launched by UNESCO, supported the recommendations presented in the Secretary-General's note on the implementation of the international plan of action for the United Nations Literacy Decade

(A/59/267), and encouraged a more integrated approach to literacy and education.

32. The Republic of Korea would study carefully the recommendation, contained in the Secretary-General's report on the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (A/59/176), concerning the establishment of a national coordinating mechanism to review and propose legislation that affected families.

33. The Republic of Korea supported the Secretary-General's call, contained in his report on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/59/164), for additional capacity-building aimed at promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and welcomed the ongoing efforts of various United Nations funds, programmes and agencies on that theme. In the Republic of Korea, the division in charge of the elderly population at the Ministry of Health and Welfare had been restructured in order to better implement the Madrid Plan. A presidential committee on ageing and future society had been established, and the Government was drafting a Basic Act on Ageing Society. Firmly committed to the principles of social development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Republic of Korea was deploying efforts to ensure the equality of all citizens and the protection of the elderly.

34. *Ms. Abdul Aziz (Malaysia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

35. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He said it was painful that current progress in achieving the main goals of the Summit continues was characterized by a gap between proclaimed objectives and the actual orientation of national and international policies and believed that - as the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120) indicated - the causes of that gap were related to three factors: the social aspects of globalization; macroeconomic policies and social development goals; and the capacity of national Governments to undertake social policies. The report had further found that so far the Commission for Social Development had not contributed sufficiently to better understanding and management of social development in the context of globalization. That exacerbated the marginalization of developing countries in the process. They could reap the benefits of globalization only if they were able to participate in globalization effectively. In the current globalized and interdependent world economy, public authorities in developing countries were in fact losing some of their policy-making autonomy and that undermined their capacity to undertake social policies, which was one of their primary responsibilities. In that connection, partnership initiatives such as those generated for the implementation of Agenda 21 could provide a model for advancing social development.

36. Indonesia was making progress on social development efforts at various levels. The Indonesian Parliament had just adopted the Law on the Social Security System. The law ensured that all Indonesians would be protected against social risks and that their basic needs would be properly met.

37. Indonesia paid particular attention to youth as an essential element for national development and, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations, had recently organized a Regional Workshop on "Youth in Poverty in Southeast Asia". At the national level, the Indonesia Youth Employment Network had been launched on 12 August 2004 as part of the observance of the International Youth Day.

38. Regarding the issue of ageing, Indonesia was fully committed to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific. Government measures that addressed the issue of elderly persons included Law No. 13/1998 on the Welfare of Older Persons and the establishment of a National Commission on Ageing, whose main tasks were to coordinate the implementation of national policies and programmes and to make relevant recommendations to the President.

39. Indonesia attached great importance to the family as the basic unit of society and, accordingly, promoted family empowerment programmes emphasizing the fulfilment of basic needs and access to information and economic resources.

40. **Mr. Nikiforov** (Russian Federation) said that the Forty-third Session of the Commission for Social Development and the Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly in 2005 would be opportunities to draw up an assessment of progress achieved toward the

attainment of the goals set at the World Summit for Social Development and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to revitalize the social development programme. Development gaps between countries favoured armed conflicts and terrorism. It was therefore essential to prepare for the new challenges of globalization with a view to overcoming its negative consequences, particularly by building on the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The high-level meeting held on 20 September 2004 had given new impulse to the fight against hunger and poverty, even though the various forms that the contribution of States would take had yet to be determined.

41. The Russian Federation had achieved significant progress at the economic and social level: gross domestic product (GDP) was growing steadily, the family revenue rate of increase was higher than inflation, the number of persons living under the poverty line had decreased by one third in four years and a federal law profoundly reforming the social protection system had been enacted in 2004. Moreover, the Russian Federation planned to introduce market mechanisms in the areas of education, housing and health.

42. Regarding the disabled, the Russian Government supported the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in its important task and believed that the committee should not be prompted to speed up its work, if the quality of the draft convention were to suffer as a result. At the end of 2004, the Federation of Russia would establish a national body responsible for aligning national law with the provisions of the convention.

43. Referring to the recent tragic events, the representative of the Russian Federation stressed that terrorist attacks aimed at slowing down the country's progress were doomed to failure.

44. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that his delegation endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He said that attaining internationally agreed development goals, particularly those that had been set in the Millennium Declaration and at the World Summit for Social Development, demanded a new partnership between developed and developing countries. Regarding the objectives of the United Nations Literacy Decade, the time had come for action, in the form of more focused attention and increased resources.

45. Bangladesh viewed social development as critically important, played an active role in the Commission for Social Development and had demonstrated its commitment when it had chaired the forty-first session of that body in 2003.

46. Although domestic social development was basically a national responsibility, governments could not fully achieve that goal without international cooperation and active involvement of civil society and all relevant partners.

47. Certain that social development could take place only against a matrix of pluralism, democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, gender justice and women's empowerment, Bangladesh was currently undergoing a societal transformation by adhering to those values. In 2004, the World Bank had observed that Bangladesh had "quietly but steadily established a track record of progress on many important social and economic indicators" and that Bangladesh had the highest primary school enrolment rates in the developing world, including among poor children.

48. The Government of Bangladesh had invested heavily in education. Primary education had been made compulsory, education was free for girls through the twelfth grade and students were awarded stipends and scholarships. Those measures had contributed considerably to the eradication of illiteracy. Innovative, home-grown ideas, such as non-formal education, had also helped to enhance literacy among people of all ages.

49. In Bangladesh, the family played a vital social role. The Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, observed in 2004, should further support, promote and strengthen the family at the national and international levels.

50. With regard to young people, Bangladesh focused on education, training, participation, awareness programme, employment, and development. In 1978, it had initiated an action plan on youth employment, which had lead to the creation of a Ministry for youth. A national youth policy had been adopted in 2003. Bangladesh supported all United Nations programmes concerning youth.

51. Older persons living in developing countries faced serious challenges. There was an urgent need to work towards their well-being and full participation in society in consonance with the promises made in Madrid. The Government of Bangladesh had introduced an old-age allowance programme. Other targeted programmes focused on social security and welfare measures (for instance, allowances for aged widows and distressed and deserted old women, and homes for abandoned, dispossessed and disabled aged persons). Geriatric and related issues had been given due importance under the country's fifth five-year plan.

52. Bangladesh was appreciative of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and looked forward to the outcome of that work. Bangladesh has adopted a national policy for persons with disabilities and the Government worked closely with civil society organizations (CSOs) to provide education, training, economic opportunity and rehabilitation programmes for that group. A Disability Welfare Act had been enacted in 2001 and a special foundation for the welfare of the disabled had been established.

53. A coordinated and integrated follow-up to all of the major United Nations conferences was crucial to the attainment of their aims. All States should work together at the United Nations to bring development to the forefront of their goals, place people at the centre of development and ensure a better coordination of the efforts of developed and developing countries.

54. **Mr. Mahtab** (India), after endorsing the statement made by Qatar, said that, according to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), the work of the Commission for Social Development had not been pursued substantively in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). That work could be meaningful only if recognized, and only if its outcomes were utilized by governments.

55. The report also commented on the uneven progress towards the achievement of the Summit's main goals because of the inadequate capacity of the governments of developing countries. It was therefore necessary for the international community to strengthen its cooperation and for the Division for Social Policy and Development to undertake an analytical assessment of the issue. It was also necessary to reform the international financial institutions (IFIs), some of whose policies had adverse effects, ensure progress in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on commodities and strengthen ECOSOC's oversight role.

56. The report of the Secretary-General alluded to the social aspects of globalisation. Unfortunately, however, it did not in that context refer to the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. India urged the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Commission for Social Development to give careful consideration to those recommendations.

57. The impact of the developmental strategy pursued by India over the past two decades in the social sector, as measured through poverty-reduction, population-growth, education and health indicators, had comprised significant improvements. There was, however, a need to accelerate efforts to ameliorate the quality of life, strengthen public-private partnerships and promote the involvement of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation of social programmes.

58. While literacy rates in India had increased from 18 percent in 1951 to 65 percent in 2001 and elementary education had become a fundamental right, education had been identified as a key area of vulnerability that needed to be addressed. Towards that end, the Government planned to raise public spending on education at the federal and state levels and to set up a National Commission on Education to allocate resources and monitor programmes. It also planned to increase public spending on health in coming years, with emphasis on primary health care and on a national health-insurance scheme for poor families.

59. The Secretary-General's note on the implementation of the international plan of action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (A/59/267) was indeed alarming, in view of the fact that close to one billion people were illiterate. The problem needed to be acted upon without any further delay.

60. The Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 had drawn the international community's attention to an area that had not until then received adequate consideration. The Secretary General's report (A/59/164) provided a thorough overview of action that

had been and should further be taken in order to address the needs of an ageing population. United Nations agencies and civil society, particularly NGOs, could provide key support and backstopping to governments in meeting their obligations in that area.

61. The Tenth Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development would be observed in 2005. In that connection, there was an urgent need to assess the results achieved and to put people at the centre of development.

62. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) endorsed the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the group of 77 and China. She said that social development was the governments' responsibility and necessitated greater commitment at the national and international levels. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), she stressed that official development assistance (ODA) was crucial to the developing countries and the least developed countries (LDCs) in eradicating poverty and solving the problem of external debt. She called attention to the ten-year review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social development and to the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, which the Commission for Social Development would conduct at its next session.

63. Sudan was persuaded that poverty and inequality between and within States could not be eliminated without improving the existing infrastructure, particularly in Africa, and called upon the international community to redouble its efforts to strengthen infrastructure facilities and to create an environment conducive to the development of all economies. Since development was a human right, economic sanctions should not be imposed unilaterally. The right to food and medicines must be guaranteed. Foreign occupation, still a key obstacle to social and economic development, should be brought to an end to enable the countries concerned to exercise sovereignty over their territory. Efficient international cooperation was indispensable in the fight against endemic diseases, particularly malaria, and against HIV/AIDS.

64. The representative of Sudan recalled that the last round of negotiations aimed at signing a peace agreement in her country would start on 17 October 2004. Sudan hoped that the agreement would have a positive effect on its social development and poverty reduction efforts.

65. Older people received special attention in Sudan. The delegation of Sudan welcomed the recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Efforts were made to ensure that persons with disabilities were active members of Sudanese society, and a national board had been set up to that effect. The Sudanese Government had also set up a plenary committee responsible for following up on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

66. Moreover, a national committee had been set up to coordinate activities related to the observance of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family and a national programme of action had been drawn up in that connection. The Sudanese government had paid special attention to programmes aimed at helping families to fulfil their social mission and strengthening the family's role as a key development factor and an irreplaceable social institution.

67. Sudan welcomed the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (A/59/176) and called attention to the landmark International Conference on the Family, to be held in Doha in November 2004, which should consolidate United Nations action with a view to carrying out family-related programmes.

68. **Mr. Heikura** (Finland), speaking under agenda item 94 (a) and as a youth representative of Finland, noted that there were more than a billion children and adolescents and that within ten years they would join the planet's working-age population. They were the best educated generation ever and had a tremendous potential for economic and social development. However, to a large extent, especially in developing countries, only underpaid and insecure jobs with small possibilities for advancement were available to young generations. If young people could not move into productive jobs that enabled them to pay taxes and support public services, there was a substantial risk that the economic investment of governments in education and training would be wasted. Young women and men who found themselves alienated from society,

frustrated by lack of opportunity and without means to take care of themselves were more vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.

69. The activities of the Youth Employment Network, created by the Secretary-General, had been strengthened by two General Assembly resolutions, encouraging countries to prepare national action plans on youth employment and specifically involve young people in that process. Ten countries, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal and Sri Lanka, had stepped forward to be lead countries in that process and showcase national plans that others could learn from.

70. The Youth Employment Network tried to ensure that youth were actively involved in those plans. In Azerbaijan, a grouping of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations (CSOs), led by the National Assembly of Youth Organisations, had formed a National Coalition on Youth Employment, which would work closely with the Government and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to develop the National Action Plan on Youth Employment. In Namibia, the Minister of Higher Education had asked the Namibian National Youth Council to assist the Government in forming a multi-stakeholder task team that would work on developing the Action Plan. As a youth representative, the speaker supported that type of activity and hoped that all Member States could learn from the results so far achieved by the Youth Employment Network, and especially from the example of the ten lead countries.

71. Rather than being seen as a target group for which employment must be found, young people should be accepted as partners for development. Just as they wished to be partners in national employment issues, they also wanted to participate in the important work carried out by the United Nations.

72. Although resolution 36/17 adopted by the General Assembly in 1981 had called upon "governments to consider the inclusion of youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly" and although that call had been reconfirmed by resolutions in 1996, 2001 and 2003, almost 180 Member States had still not included Youth Representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly. It was a matter of concern that currently the Youth Representatives to the General Assembly were far from reflecting the world's cultural diversity. The contribution of youth from developing countries and countries with economies in transition would be of especially important.

73. Lastly, the speaker emphasized that 2005 would be particularly interesting in view of youth's participation in the United Nations system, since the evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond would be debated then by the General Assembly in plenary. Accordingly, he urged Member States to make all possible efforts to include Youth Representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly.

74. **Mr. Alday** (Mexico), speaking under agenda items 94 and 95, said that his delegation endorsed the statement made a day earlier by the Rio Group. Mexico supported the reforms undertaken with a view to reinforcing the United Nations in all areas, particularly in the economic and social sectors, in order to promote development and international cooperation and to reduce poverty.

75. Aware of the importance of the family in social life, Mexico supported debates aimed at enhancing the place of the family within the United Nations, which should encourage and help States to collect information on the situation of the family at home in order to identify ways for addressing family-related issues as part of the formulation and implementation of international pro-development policies.

76. Mexico welcomed the progress achieved in negotiations on a comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. That area would henceforth be a priority of international action for social development and human rights. The work accomplished had lead to unprecedented worldwide mobilization for the rights of people with disabilities and for their entitlement to equal opportunities. Mexico believed that efforts should be redoubled to complete that work - demanded for years by the persons concerned - as soon as possible.

77. The Mexican delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing (A/59/164) and endorsed the idea that, in formulating national frameworks for development and poverty-reduction strategies, it was indispensable to take into account ageing-related issues. Mexico encouraged the full human development of aged persons by promoting active ageing, without

discrimination, through instruments and mechanisms ensuring their well-being and the recognition of their capabilities. Accordingly, in line with the principles governing the regional strategy for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico had taken various measures in favour of persons over 60, with a view to promoting their health and well-being and a favourable environment for them. Through a national foundation for the elderly, the Mexican Government coordinated the activities of the various bodies active in that area, encouraging the participation of civil society and of the elderly themselves.

78. **Mr. Gansukh** (Mongolia) said that many of the social development goals defined at the World Summit for Social Development had not been pursued to the extent that had been foreseen and that the international community should intensify its efforts in order to implement the commitments made in Copenhagen.

79. Mongolia welcomed the recent report of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization and believed that its recommendations should be given high priority. As the Secretary-General had indicated in his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/59/120), "particular attention should be given to the principle of a people-centred approach and its realization in public policies and development strategies."

80. Mongolia stood committed to the implementation of the social development goals. Considerable progress had been achieved in that area, but further efforts were needed to meet the challenges, including poverty, which was still widespread in the country.

81. Although primarily a responsibility of national governments, social development could not be fully achieved without the participation and partnership of all national stakeholders and the cooperation and support by the international community. In that regard, the Mongolian delegation welcomed the New York Declaration on the Action against Hunger and Poverty adopted on 20 September 2004.

82. Mongolia was convinced that education, and literacy in particular, constituted not only a human right, but also a key prerequisite to social development. It was crucial that governments should allocate adequate budgetary resources to education to enable it to play its role in development and poverty eradication. Worldwide, over 800 million adults were currently illiterate and over 104 million school-age children had no access to schooling. The importance of education should in no case be underestimated.

83. As the Director-General of UNESCO had underscored, the international community would not be able to meet its literacy commitments, if the present trends continued. Action was therefore required. Mongolia had not been idle: it had carried out a series of activities aimed at raising public awareness. It applauded the efforts made by UNESCO as part of the United Nations Literacy Decade, urged all Member States and international organisations to place literacy questions high in their agendas and planned to introduce a draft resolution on that issue.

84. **Ms. Fleming** (World Bank), speaking under agenda items 93 and 94, said that without empowering people to be agents of change, without living up to the commitments made to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and without addressing the social dimensions of development, the world would continue to falter and face imbalance and inequity.

85. The World Bank had come to recognize that social development was about putting people at the centre of development. Development that was not sustainable in social terms would not be sustainable in economic and environmental terms. The key elements of social development, as articulated in the Copenhagen Declaration, formed currently an integral part of the World Bank's support to countries in their work to achieve effective development and eradicate poverty. The Bank had recently launched a programme for social progress based on three fundamental principles: inclusion, cohesion and accountability. The social development strategy expected to be finalized by the end of 2004 would aim to mainstream social development tools throughout the Bank's activities and would be organized around the following four themes: social analysis, community-driven development and social capital, civic engagement and participation, and conflict and development.

86. The Bank had taken careful note of the findings of the Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization and would continue to work with partners on their appropriate implementation. The Bank was taking up the challenge to help close the gap between commitments and their actual realization, fully aware that inclusion was a pillar of effective

development. It focused on the important role of women and youth in development, and on the special needs of indigenous communities and people with disabilities, and developed programmes to meet those needs.

87. Humanity was in period of critical imbalance and instability, unprecedented wealth and unprecedented poverty. In the current globalizing, technologically sophisticated world, the international community had the potential to remedy the existing imbalances.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.